

Obituaries

Smoking, cancer tie expert dies

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — Dr. Alton Ochsner, a heart surgeon who is credited with first linking smoking to lung cancer in the 1930s, died Thursday. He was 85.

He had undergone surgery for a heart ailment Sept. 5 at the Ochsner Medical Foundation Hospital, which he founded in 1942 and directed for 24 years.

Ochsner performed 20,000 operations during his career, acting as physician to such notables as Argentine President Juan Peron, golfer Ben Hogan and actor Gary Cooper.

He began studying a link between smoking and lung cancer in 1936, when as professor of surgery at Tulane University's school of medicine he saw a dramatic rise of cancer cases.

Two years later, Ochsner addressed a convention of the American College of Surgeons in New York City and said his studies showed cancer and smoking were related.

He would later be elected president of the surgeon's college after gaining worldwide fame in performing complex heart operations.

Ochsner was known for his outspokenness and political conservatism, issuing blistering attacks on communism, as well as on the complacency and poor health habits of Americans.